

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (-)-Benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide.
2. A therapeutic composition comprising a pharmaceutically effective amount of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide, in association with a physiologically acceptable excipient.
3. A method for the treatment of hypersomnia, which comprises administering, to a patient in need of such a treatment, a pharmaceutically effective amount of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide as an arousing agent.
4. A method for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, which comprises administering, to a patient in need of such a treatment, a pharmaceutically effective amount of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide as a CNS stimulant.
5. A method for the preparation of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide, which comprises:

1°) reacting (\pm)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid with (-)- α -methylbenzylamine to give the (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate of (-)- α -methylbenzylamine,

2°) converting the resulting (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate salt of (-)- α -methylbenzylamine to (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid by acid hydrolysis, and

3°) subjecting the resulting (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid to an amidation reaction with NH_3 .

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein stage 3°) is carried out in two steps, namely:

3a) esterification of the (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid to a C_1 - C_3 lower alkyl (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate, followed by

3b) transamidation of the resulting C_1 - C_3 lower alkyl (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate with NH_3 .

7. The method according to claim 5 or 6, wherein:

- in stage 1°), the reaction is carried out in the presence of an excess of amine relative to the stoichiometric conditions, with a molar ratio amine/acid of between 1.02/1 and 1.15/1,

- in stage 2°), the said acid hydrolysis is carried out at a temperature of between 30 and 45°C,
- in step 3a), the said esterification reaction is carried out so as to give a C₁-C₃ lower alkyl ester selected from the group comprising the isopropyl, ethyl and methyl esters, and
- in step 3b), the said transamidation reaction is carried out with a stream of NH₃ gas.